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DEPARTMENT FOR WHA/CAR (BENT)

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SUBJECT: CODEL ISSA'S MARCH 30 MEETING WITH NEWLY INSTALLED  
PRIME MINISTER PORTIA SIMPSON MILLER

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Summary  
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¶1. Codel Issa met with newly installed Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller on March 30, shortly after the PM was sworn in at King's House. The cordial meeting lasted nearly one-and-a-quarter hours. Simpson-Miller expressed determination to move quickly to address Jamaica's joblessness and high crime rates, particularly among youths. Education will also be a priority. Codel Issa urged the PM to consider seeking Millennium Challenge Account funding, and recommended that she visit Washington "sooner rather than later" to explore potential avenues of engagement and assistance. Ambassador Tony Hylton, who was appointed Foreign and Trade Minister shortly after the meeting, said that Jamaica and fellow CARICOM states still needed special consideration, in trade issues, as "small, vulnerable economies." Simpson Miller said she expected she would have "no honeymoon" as she attempted to tackle Jamaica's myriad problems. End Summary.

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Codel Issa Meets the New Prime Minister  
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¶2. The Ambassador and the U.S. Congressional Delegation headed by Rep. Darrell Issa, and including Reps. Sheila Jackson-Lee, Gregory Meeks, William Lacy Clay, Diane Watson, and Mrs. Renee Chenault-Fattah, wife of Rep. Chaka Fattah (who was unable to make the trip to Jamaica), met late March 30 with newly sworn-in Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller, at the PM,s suite in a New Kingston hotel. Simpson-Miller was joined by Ambassador Tony Hilton (who was subsequently appointed as the new Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade) late-arriving Commerce Minister Phillip Paulwell, PM personal assistant, Anne Shirley, and by the PM,s aide-de-camp. Accompanying the Ambassador and Codel Issa were DCM, Pol/EconCouns (notetaker), Congressional staffer Ted Brennan, and two Codel military escorts. The meeting lasted an hour and one-quarter, and took place in the PM,s suite at a Kingston hotel.

¶3. Rep. Issa began by congratulating the new PM on her swearing-in earlier that day, and asked how Congress might best assist her new administration. After welcoming the members of the delegation and thanking them for attending the ceremony, she said noting that she had recently met a young deportee who told her that he had been &tricked8 by U.S. authorities into leaving the U.S. without the proper documentation, and that the issue of deportees from the U.S. merited closer scrutiny. The new PM pledged to combat

narcotrafficking while lamenting the related, ready availability in Jamaica of illegal foreign-origin firearms. Expanding on the theme, Simpson Miller said that she would be an &activist Prime Minister<sup>8</sup> who would address crime and poverty issues in poorer communities, and attempt to stem rural-to-urban drift through an unspecified job creation plan. Advocating increased social intervention by the GOJ, she said, &If you arrest one criminal (leader), six more rise up to replace him.<sup>8</sup> The PM expressed interest in introducing foreign language instruction into Jamaican schools.

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Crime Issues  
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¶4. Crime was a significant topic of discussion, and Rep. Issa agreed that we could explore ways of impeding the flow of illegal firearms entering Jamaica. When Rep. Watson asked how the weapons were entering the country, Simpson Miller replied that she had limited information, but suggested that fishing boats and &barrels<sup>8</sup> (the generic term for packages shipped to Jamaican families and friends by members of the diaspora community.) Rep. Watson observed that counternarcotics efforts also impact gun smuggling, and suggested that CARICOM be involved in interdiction efforts. After offering greetings on behalf of Speaker Hastert and Minority Leader Pelosi, Rep. Jackson-Lee suggested to the PM that the GOJ explore enhanced anti-crime efforts with CARICOM partners, adding that in-kind training by DEA and the FBI might also be appropriate. Rep. Clay invited the PM to consider studying how the Americorps program in the U.S. might be applicable to Jamaica, and urged that she take steps to ensure that Jamaica did not develop what he termed &a prison-industrial complex<sup>8</sup> in response to its crime

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challenges.

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MCA  
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¶5. Rep. Jackson-Lee strongly suggested that the PM seriously consider how Millennium Challenge Account funding might benefit Jamaica. Rep. Meeks seconded Rep. Jackson-Lee on MCA, noting that overall U.S. assistance funding had been cut back. Observing that &we won't have a honeymoon period<sup>8</sup> to address Jamaica's pressing problems, Simpson-Miller said she would work closely with CARICOM on youth development and employment generation, adding that assistance in these areas would also &help a lot.<sup>8</sup> As she had done previously with the Ambassador, Simpson Miller expressed keen interest in MCA, and, as she had done during a recent meeting with the Ambassador, instructed Paulwell to follow up with the Embassy.

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Trade: Still Seeking Special Consideration  
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¶6. Ambassador Hylton (who shortly after the meeting was announced as Jamaica's new Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade) spoke positively about the Secretary's recent meetings in Nassau with CARICOM counterparts, and urged that such engagement be sustained. He also asked for Congressional support for &small, vulnerable economies<sup>8</sup> in trade discussions with the Caribbean.

¶7. Rep. Issa replied that Presidential authority to conclude trade agreements such as CAFTA was expiring, and suggested that the Prime Minister visit Washington &sooner rather than later<sup>8</sup> to discuss trade and other issues. The PM replied that she intended to begin exploring an early visit to Washington. Simpson-Miller spoke warmly about the President, who had called her on March 28 to congratulate her on becoming Prime Minister. She noted that she fondly recalled

the visit to Jamaica of Vice President George H.W. Bush during the 1980's, and urged that the current president remember the CARICOM region.

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CSI  
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¶8. Rep. Meeks asked how the GOJ was doing with regard to the Container Security Initiative (CSI). The PM replied that the Port Authority of Jamaica, with welcome USG assistance, was &doing well8 in intercepting contraband. Paulwell added that Jamaican ports had been certified by the USG, that PAJ had installed X-ray machines, but could use more.

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Ethanol  
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¶9. On the issue of ethanol, the PM stated that Jamaica would begin using 10-percent ethanol fuel on May 1. Rep. Issa noted that Brazil,s demand for ethanol exceeded its domestic capacity, and suggested that the GOJ consult with the GOB on ethanol.

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Comment  
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¶10. Simpson Miller,s willingness to receive the Codel (and to spend so much time with them) so soon after taking office is a promising indication that she wants to strengthen the bilateral relationship. End Comment.

¶11. This cable has been cleared by Codel Issa.  
JOHNSON